

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraphs added in the first preliminary amendment after paragraph 0016 with the following new paragraphs:

[0016.1] In a preferred embodiment, the invention is a method of processing a call ~~directed to a specific communications device that is connected to a telecommunications system~~, the method comprising: informing the customers of the telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique sets of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings is normally, but not always, associated with one type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system (e.g., in advertising and/or in a service contract); assigning one of a plurality of unique multi-digit (e.g., common 7-digit) telephone numbers to each selected customer (e.g., subscriber) of the telecommunications system within each area code of each local area and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device that is connected to the telecommunications system the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique sets of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings plus said unique multi-digit telephone number to identify the specific communications device other than a land voice line to the other customers of the telecommunications system; receiving a sequence of signals representing a specific set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings plus a specific unique (e.g., within an area code) multi-digit (e.g., common or multi-functional) telephone number that has been dialed by a caller, the combination of the specific set of prefix characteristics plus said specific multi-digit telephone number and no other common 7-digit telephone number alone

identifying the specific communications device that is the destination for said call; and connecting said call to the specific communications device that is the destination for said call without necessarily determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed. For example, in dialing a combination that includes a particular set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings, the particular set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings dialed does not alone indicate to the downstream equipment that the customer desires to send a fax message, i.e., communicate with a fax machine. Preferably, the specific set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings is the # symbol and the # symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine. Preferably, the specific set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings is the * symbol and * symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone. Preferably, the specific set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings is a digit plus the * symbol and the * symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

[0016.2] In preferred embodiments of the invention, the following results necessarily follow from practicing the invention: (1) providing about 7.92 million assignable combinations for landline voice communication devices within each area code, about 7.92 million assignable combinations for facsimile or second ~~land line~~ landline voice communications devices within each area code, and about ~~7.92~~ 71.28 million assignable combinations for cellular telephone ~~communication~~ communications devices within each area code, which equals a grand total of about 87.12 million assignable combinations available within each area code; (2) at least about

~~tripling~~ increasing by a factor of 11 the number of assignable combinations within each area code when compared to the number of assignable numbers available within an area code of a conventional telecommunications system; thereby allowing at least about sixty-six percent fewer area codes to be used to serve local areas the number of area codes to be reduced from 302 to 54 when compared to a said conventional telecommunications system; and (3) substantially eliminating the overlay practice of providing two area codes in a specific local area and requiring customers to dial three extra digits or ten digits to reach a specific communications device within a said specific local area; (4) providing three separate and distinct numbering complements consisting of a first complement of common 7-digit telephone numbers for landline voice communications devices, a second complement of 8-digit combinations containing a # symbol for facsimile communications devices, and a third complement of 8-digit or 9-digit combinations containing a * symbol for cellular communications devices, thereby eliminating the extensive processing required by said conventional telecommunications system to determine whether a common 7-digit telephone number is being used by a landline voice communications device, a facsimile communications device or a cellular communications device; and (5) eliminating the practice of splitting a region of said conventional telecommunications system previously served by an existing single area code into two halves whenever the existing area code reaches its maximum capacity of 7.92 million subscribers, and adding a new area code in one of the halves of the region, forcing one half or 3.96 million subscribers to accept a new 10-digit telephone number containing said new area code, at a great level of inconvenience, stress and cost of changing telephone numbers with the addition of each new area code.

[0016.3] In another preferred embodiment, the invention is a method of directing a call to a specific communications device, comprising: announcing to (e.g., informing in some way) the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique symbols is normally (e.g., but not in a mandatory way) associated with a particular type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system; assigning one of a plurality of unique (e.g., within each area code) common 7-digit telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique symbols plus said unique (e.g., multi-function or common) 7-digit telephone number to identify the specific communications device (e.g., landline telephone, facsimile machine, cellular telephone, etc.) to other customers of the telecommunications system (and/or to other customers of other telecommunications systems); and receiving a call having been initiated by a caller by dialing a combination comprising a specific unique symbol and a specific telephone number; determining the destination indicated by the combination, no other common 7-digit telephone number alone indicating said destination ~~without necessarily determining the type of communications device (e.g., fax machine versus line telephone versus cellular telephone versus pager) to which the call is directed;~~ and routing the call to the specific communications device represented by the combination. Preferably, the specific unique symbol is the pound key and the pound key plus said specific telephone number identifies a specific ~~fax~~ facsimile machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated ~~fax~~ facsimile machine. Preferably, the specific unique symbol is the star key and star key plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone. Preferably, the specific

unique symbol is a digit plus the star key and star key plus said specific common 7-digit telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone. Preferably, the method further comprises directing the call to a cellular processing network if the specific unique symbol and the specific common 7-digit telephone number indicates that the call is being made to a specific cellular telephone.

[0016.4] In yet another preferred embodiment, the invention is a system for processing a call made to a (e.g., multi-function or common) telephone number and directed to a specific communications device to which that telephone number is assigned (e.g., linked in the minds of customers), the system comprising: means for announcing to the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of suggested sets of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings is normally associated with a single type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system; means for assigning one of a plurality of common telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said suggested sets of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings plus said common telephone number (e.g., linked to the selected customer in the minds of other customers) to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system; a sequence of signals representing a specific set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings and a specific common telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the sequence of signals being a the sole directory number for the specific communications device (which directory number may or may not be listed), the set of ~~prefix~~

~~characteristics~~ symbol headings immediately preceding the common telephone number, being distinguishable from said common telephone number and together with said common telephone number defining a destination for said call, ~~each common telephone number having at least one destination~~; and a routing apparatus having a switching component and an identification component for determining the intended destination of the call ~~without determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed~~ and connecting the call to that destination.

[0016.5] In another preferred embodiment, the invention is a routing system for directing calls to different communications devices having identical telephone numbers, said system comprising: an administrative subsystem comprising means for informing the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of suggested symbols is normally (but not always) associated with each type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system and means for assigning one of a plurality of unique telephone numbers (e.g., within an area code) to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said plurality of suggested symbols plus said unique telephone number to identify the specific communications device (e.g., of any available type) to other customers of the telecommunications system; a network subsystem having routing apparatus including a switching component and an identification component for processing a call to a destination, the call including a sequence of signals indicating a set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings and a telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the destination being identified by the set of ~~prefix characteristics~~ symbol headings, the sequence

of signals being a directory number for the specific communications device; and at least one communications device assigned to a telephone number; wherein said the set of ~~prefix characters~~ symbol headings does not necessarily indicate to said routing apparatus that the specific communications device is a particular type of communications device. For example, in a preferred embodiment of the invention, an 8-digit facsimile number and an 8-digit cellular telephone number of each selected customer would each contain the common 7-digit landline number of the selected customer.

[0016.6] In a further preferred embodiment, in a telecommunications system in which at least some subscribers control a plurality of communications devices, a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, the invention is a system comprising: means for accepting a combination comprising a ~~code~~ heading and a common telephone number (e.g., one linked in the mind of callers and/or in a directory with a particular subscriber) as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber (e.g., a line telephone, a cellular telephone, a facsimile machine, or a pager), said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other telephone number (e.g., each specific communications device is associated with only one directory number); and means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber; ~~wherein said code does not necessarily indicate to said means for routing that the specific communications device of the particular subscriber is a particular type of communications device.~~ For example, in a preferred embodiment, using a # symbol as a code does not indicate to the means for routing that the caller

desires to send a fax message. This is conventionally done by the calling tone, a one-second burst of 1100 Hertz occurring every three seconds, that is produced by the caller's fax machine. Preferably, the means for accepting is selected from the group consisting of: a line telephone, a cellular or wireless telephone, a facsimile machine, and a pager. Preferably, said ~~code~~ heading is selected from the group consisting of: a prefix that precedes an area code, a prefix that follows an area code, a suffix that precedes an area code, and a suffix that follows an area code. Preferably, said ~~code~~ heading is the # symbol and the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine. Preferably, said ~~code~~ heading is the * symbol and * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone. Preferably, said ~~code~~ heading is a digit plus the * symbol and the digit plus the * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone. Preferably, said ~~code~~ heading is a digit plus the # symbol and the digit plus the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific voice land line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Please add the following paragraphs after paragraph [0016.6]:

[0016.7] In a telecommunications system, a preferred embodiment of the invention is a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising: means for assigning a common telephone number to the particular subscriber; means for accepting the common telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said

specific communications device of the particular subscriber being a first voice landline telephone; means for accepting a combination comprising a symbol and the common telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber. For example, in a preferred embodiment of the invention, an 8-digit facsimile number and an 8-digit cellular telephone number of the particular customer would each contain the common 7-digit landline number of the particular customer.

[0016.8] In another preferred embodiment implemented in a telecommunications system, the invention is a routing system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber within an area code, said routing system comprising: means for assigning a common 7-digit telephone number to the particular subscriber; means for accepting the common 7-digit telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being a first voice landline device; means for accepting an 8-part or 9-part telephone number comprising a heading and the common 7-digit telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said other specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber.

Preferably, said caller has the option of using as the heading a # for a facsimile device or a second voice device, a * for a first cellular device, or a 2*, a 3*, a 4*, a 5*, a 6*, a 7*, a 8*, or a 9* for another cellular device. Preferably, in this embodiment, 7.92 million voice landline devices or other devices, 7.92 million facsimile devices or other devices, and 71.28 million cellular devices or other devices are reachable with the area code, for a total of 87.12 million communications devices of any type being reachable within the area code.

[0016.9] In another preferred embodiment implemented in a telecommunications system, the invention is a method for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of one of a plurality of subscribers within an area code, said method for routing comprising: assigning a common 7-digit telephone number to the one of a plurality of subscribers; accepting the common 7-digit telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the one of a plurality of subscribers, said specific communications device being a first voice landline device; accepting an 8-part or 9-part telephone number comprising a heading and the common 7-digit telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach another specific communications device of the one of a plurality of subscribers, said other specific communications device being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the one of the plurality of subscribers. Preferably, said caller has the option of using as the heading a # for a facsimile device or a second landline voice device, a * for a first cellular device, or a 2*, a 3*, a 4*, a 5*, a 6*, a 7*, a 8*, or a 9* for another cellular device. In this embodiment, 7.92 million voice landline devices or other

devices, 7.92 million facsimile devices or other devices, and 71.28 million cellular devices or other devices are reachable with the area code, for a total of 87.12 million communications devices of any type being reachable within the area code. With preferred embodiments, the availability of telephone numbers for subscribers within each area code increases from 7.92 million telephone numbers in the background art, to 87.12 million telephone numbers with the present invention, where the increase of 79.2 million telephone numbers is derived from the addition of 10 new headings (e.g., #, *, and 2* through 9*) to the present block of 7.92 million telephone numbers, to produce said increase of 10×7.92 or 79.2 million new telephone numbers.

[0016.9] In yet another preferred embodiment in a telecommunications system having 199.1 million residential subscribers, the invention is a method for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of one of said residential subscribers, said method for routing comprising: assigning a common 7-digit telephone number to the residential subscriber; accepting the common 7-digit telephone number alone as an indication that a caller desires to reach a first voice landline communications device of the residential subscriber or accepting an 8-part or 9-part telephone number comprising a heading and the common 7-digit common telephone number as an indication that the caller desires to reach a cellular telephone communications device of the residential subscriber, said cellular telephone communications device being reachable by the caller's dialing no other common 7-digit telephone number; and routing said telephone call to the appropriate communications device of the residential subscriber. Preferably, in this embodiment, the residential subscriber can choose any one of the

residential subscriber's 7-digit, 8-digit or 9-digit telephone numbers to be his basic one-number system because they are all exclusively assigned to him; all of telephone numbers that include the residential subscriber's 7-digit telephone number are assigned exclusively as a set to the residential subscriber; said set of telephone numbers is permanently (exclusively) assigned to the residential subscriber as long as one of them is being used; a telephone number that included the residential subscriber's 7-digit telephone number that is not being used is held in a standby mode and cannot be disconnected and assigned to any other subscriber because it is exclusively assigned to the residential subscriber; and with the invention disclosed herein a portion of the 199.1 million residential telephone subscribers would be assigned telephone numbers for landline telephone service and cellular telephone service that contained the same 7-digit telephone number, thereby releasing that portion of common 7-digit telephone numbers for other subscribers. Thus, for each million subscribers that have, in the background art, two separate 7-digit telephone numbers, consisting of a common 7-digit landline telephone number and a separate 7-digit cellular telephone number, would have, with preferred embodiments of the present invention, one common 7-digit landline telephone number and an 8-digit cellular telephone number that contains a * plus the exact same common 7-digit landline telephone number, thereby releasing one million common 7-digit telephone numbers for use by other subscribers.